The Poetry of Flowers

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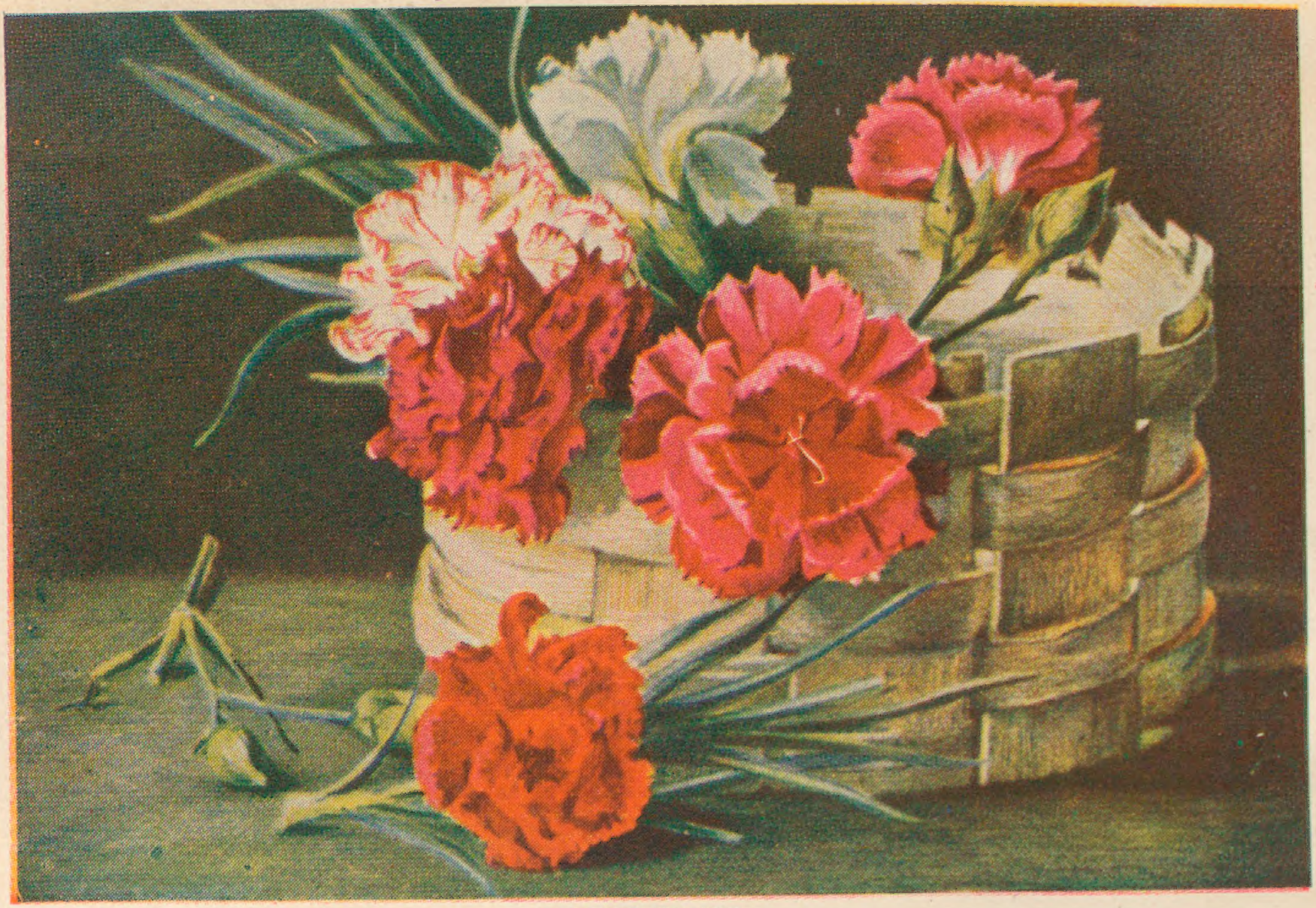

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THE
POETRY OF FLOWERS.

THE

Poetry of Flowers.

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THE NAKANISHI-YA

TOKYO.

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THE POETRY OF FLOWERS.

✦ ✦ ✦

THE SNOWDROP.

Hope.

LONE flower, hemmed in with snows, and white as they,
But hardier far, once more I see thee bend
Thy forehead, as if fearful to offend,
Like an unbidden guest. Though day by day
Storms, sallying from the mountain tops, waylay

The rising sun, and on the plains
descend;
Yet art thou welcome, as a friend
Whose zeal outruns his promise!
Blue-eyed May
Shall soon behold this border
thickly set
With bright jonquils, their odours
lavishing
On the soft west wind and his
frolic peers;
Nor will I then thy modest grace
forget,
Chaste snowdrop, venturous har-
binger of Spring,
And pensive monitor of fleeting
years!

WORDSWORTH.

THE PRIMROSE.

Childhood, and also Sadness.

ASK me why I send you here,
This firstling of the infant year;
Ask me why I send to you
This primrose all bepearled with dew;
I straight will whisper in your ears,
The sweets of love are washed with tears.
Ask me why this flower doth show
So yellow, green, and sickly too;
Ask me why the stalk is weak,
And bending, yet it doth not break;
I must tell you, these discover

What doubts and fears are in a lover.

CAREW.

DAISY.

Innocence.

Whose white investments figure innocence.

SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN, smitten by the morning ray,
I see thee rise, alert and gay,
Then, cheerful flower, my spirits play
With kindred gladness.
And when at dusk, by dews opprest,

Thou sink'st, the image of thy
rest
Hath often eased my pensive breast
Of careful sadness.

WORDSWORTH.

LILIES.

Purity.

WE are lilies fair,
The flower of virgin light;
Nature held us forth, and
said,
"Lo! my thoughts of white!"

Ever since then, angels
Hold us in their hands;
You may see them where they take
In pictures their sweet stands.

Like the garden's angels
Also do we seem,
And not the less for being crowned
With a golden dream.

Could you see around us
The enamoured air,
You would see it pale with bliss
To hold a thing so fair.

LEIGH HUNT.

POPPIES.

Consolation – Slumber – Rest.

WE are slumberous poppies,
Lords of Lethe downs,
Some awake and some asleep,
Sleeping in our crowns.

What perchance our dreams may
know,
Let our serious beauty show.

Central depth of purple,
Leaves more bright than rose,
Who shall tell what brightest
thought
Out of darkest grows;
Who through what funereal pain,
Souls to love and peace attain.

Visions aye are on us,
Unto eyes of power,
Pluto's always setting sun,
And Proserpine's bower;
There like bees, the pale souls
come,
For our drink with drowsy hum.

Taste, ye mortals, also;
Milky-hearted we;
Taste, but with a reverend care;

Active—patient be.
Too much gladness brings to gloom
Those who on the gods presume.

LEIGH HUNT.

ROSES.

Love.

WHILE we invoke the wreathèd Spring,
Resplendent Rose! to thee we'll sing;
Resplendent Rose! the flower of flowers,
Whose breath perfumes Olympus' bowers;
Whose virgin blush, of chastened dye,
Enchants so much our mortal eye.

Oft has the poet's magic tongue
The Rose's fair luxuriance sung;
And long the Muses, heavenly maids,
Have reared it in their tuneful shades.
When at the early glance of morn,
It sleeps upon the glittering thorn,
'Tis sweet to dare the tangled fence,
To cull the timid flow'ret thence,
And wipe, with tender hand, away,
The tear that on its blushes lay!
'Tis sweet to hold the infant stems,
Yet drooping with Aurora's gems,
And fresh inhale the spicy sighs
That from the weeping buds arise;
When revel reigns, when mirth is high,
And Bacchus beams in every eye,

Our rosy fillets scent exhale,
And fill with balm the fainting gale!
Oh, there is nought in Nature bright
Where Roses do not shed their light
When Morning paints the orient skies,
Her fingers burn with roseate dyes.
And when, at length, with pale decline,
Its florid beauties fade and pine,
Sweet as in youth, its balmy breath
Diffuses odour e'en in death!
Oh, whence could such a plant have sprung?
Attend—for thus the tale is sung;—
When humid from the silvery stream,

Effusing beauty's warmest beam,
Venus appeared in flushing hues,
Mellowed by Ocean's briny dews;
When in the starry courts above,
The pregnant brain of mighty Jove
Disclosed the nymph of azure glance—
The nymph who shakes the martial lance—
Then, then, in strange eventful hour,
The earth produced an infant flower,
Which sprung with blushing tinctures dressed,
And wantoned o'er its parent breast.
The gods beheld this brilliant birth,
And hailed the Rose, the boon of earth!

With nectar drops, a ruby tide,
The sweetly orient buds they dyed,
And bade them bloom, the flowers
divine
Of him who sheds the teeming
vine;
And bade them on the spang'ed
thorn
Expand their bosoms to the morn.

ANACREON.

TO THE ROSE.

Love.

ROSE! thou art the sweetest
flower,
That ever drank the amber
shower;
Rose! thou art the fondest child

Of dimpled spring, the wood-
nymph wild;
Even the gods who walk the sky
Are amorous of thy scented sigh.
Cupid, too, in Paphian shades
His hair with rosy fillets braids,
Then bring me showers of roses,
bring,
And shed them round me while
I sing.

MOORE'S *Anacreon.*

THE ROSE'S ERRAND.

I SENT a message by the rose
That words could not con-
vey;
Sweet vows, I never dared to
breathe,

And wishes pure as they;
A mute but tell-tale messenger,
It could not do me wrong;
But told the passion I concealed,
And hopes I cherished long.

My love received it with a smile
She read its thought and sighed;
Then placed it on her happy heart,
And wore it till it died.
Immortal rose! it could not die;
The spirit which it bore,
Live's in her heart as first in mine—
A joy for evermore.

C. MACKAY.

THE DAINTY ROSE.

I WILL not have the maid Clytie,
Whose head's turned by the sun;
The tulip is a courtly quean
Whom, therefore, I will shun;
The cowslip is a country wench,
The violet is a nun;
But I will woo the dainty rose,
The queen of every one.

The pea is but a wanton witch,
In too much haste to wed,
And clasps her rings on every hand:
The wolfsbane I should dread;
Nor will I dreary rosemary
That always mourns the dead—

But I will woo the dainty rose
With her cheeks of tender red.

The lily is all in white like a saint,
And so is no mate for me;
And the daisy's cheek is tipped with a blush
She is of such low degree;
Jasmine is sweet, and has many loves,
And the broom's betrothed to the bee—
But I will plight with the dainty rose,
For fairest of all is she.

T. Hood.

THE QUESTION.

I DREAMED that, as I wandered by the way,
Bare winter suddenly was changed to spring,
And gentle odours led my steps astray,
Mixed with a sound of waters murmuring
Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay
Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,
But kissed it and then fled, as thou mightest in dream.

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets,
Daisies, those pearled Arcturi of the earth,
The constellated flower that never sets;
Faint oxlips; tender bluebells, at whose birth
The sod scarce heaved; and that tall flower that wets
Its mother's face with heaven-collected tears,
When the low wind, its playmate's voice, it hears.

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,
Green cowbind and the moonlight-coloured May,
And cherry blossoms, and white cups, whose wine

Was the bright dew yet drained
not by the day;
And wild roses, and ivy serpen-
tine,
With its dark buds and leaves,
wandering astray;
And flowers azure, black and
streaked with gold,
Fairer than any wakened eyes be-
hold.

And nearer to the river's trem-
bling edge
There grew broad flag flowers,
purple prankt with white,
And starry river buds among the
sedge,
And floating water-lilies, broad
and bright,
Which lit the oak that overhung
the hedge

With moonlight beams of their
own watery light;
And bulrushes, and reeds of such
deep green
As soothed the dazzled eye with
sober sheen.

Methought that of these visionary
flowers
I made a nosegay, bound in such
a way
That the same hues, which in
their natural bowers
Were mingled or opposed, the
like array
Kept these imprisoned children of
the Hours
Within my hand,—and then,
elate and gay,
I hastened to the spot whence I
had come,

That I might there present it !—
Oh ! to whom ?

SHELLEY.

THE EGLANTINE.

I AM drunk with the honey wine
Of the moon, unfolded eglantine
Which fairies catch in hyacinth buds
The bats, the dormice, and the moles
Sleep in the walls or under the sward
Of the desolate castle-yard ;
And when 'tis split on the summer earth,
Or its fumes arise among the dew,

Their jocund dreams are full of
mirth;
They gibber their joy in sleep; for few
Of the fairies bear those bowls so
new.

SHELLEY.

THE BRIAR.

MY briar that smelled so sweet,
When gentle spring's first
heat,
Ran through thy quiet
veins;
Thou that could'st injure none,
But would'st be left alone,
Alone thou leavest me and naught
of mine remains.

What! hath no poet's lyre
O'er thee, sweet breathing briar,
  Hung fondly, ill or well?
And yet, methinks, with thee
A poet's sympathy
Whether in weal a woe; in life,
  in death might dwell.

Hard usage both must bear,
Few hands your youth will rear,
  Few bosoms cherish you;
Your tender prime must bleed
Ere you are sweet; but freed
From life, you then are prized;
  thus prized are poets too.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

LAMENT FOR NARCISSUS.

SLOW, slow, fresh fount, keep
time with my salt tears;
Yet slower yet, O faintly
gentle springs;
Lest to the heavy part the music
bears,
Woe weeps out her division, when
she sings,
Droop, herbs and flowers,
Fall, grief, in showers;
Our beauties are not ours;
O I could still
(Like melting snow upon some
craggy hill)
Drop, drop, drop, drop,

Since Nature's pride is now a withered daffodil.

BEN JONSON.

BLUEBELLS IN THE SHADE.

THE choicest buds in Flora's train let other fingers twine,
Let others snatch the damask rose or wreathe the eglantine,
I'd leave the sunshine and parterre, and seek the woodland glade,
To stretch me on the fragrant bed of bluebells in the shade.

Let others cull the daffodil, the lily soft and fair,

And deem the tulip's gaudy cup
most beautiful and rare;
But give to me, oh, give to me the
coronal that's made
Of ruby orchids mingled with the
bluebells in the shade.

The sunflower and the peony, the
poppy bright and gay,
Have no alluring charms for me;
I'd fling them all away.
Exotic bloom may fill the vase, or
grace the high-born maid,
But sweeter far to me than all are
bluebells in the shade.

ELIZA COOK.

VIOLETS.

BEAUTIFUL are you in your lowliness;
Bright are your hues, delicious is your scent,
Lovely your modest blossoms downward bent,
As shrinking from our gaze, yet prompt to bless
The passers-by with fragrance, and express,
How gracefully, though mutely eloquent
Are unobtrusive worth and meek content,
Rejoicing in their own obscure recess.

Delightful flowerets! at the voice of spring
Your buds unfolded to its sunbeams bright.
And though your blossoms soon shall fade from sight,
Above your lonely birthplace birds shall sing,
And from your clustering leaves the glowworm fling
The emerald glory of its earthborn light.

BARTON.

THE LEGEND OF THE VIOLET.

WE are violets blue
For our sweetnees found,
Careless in the mossy shades,

Looking on the ground;
Love's dropped eyelids and a kiss—
Such our breath and blueness is.

Io, the mild shape
Hidden by Love's fears,
Found us first i' the sward when she
For hunger stooped in tears.
"Wheresoe'er her lips she sets"
Jove said, "Be breaths called violets."

LEIGH HUNT.

VIOLET PREFERRED TO THE ROSE.

THE king told Gyges of the purple flower,
It chanced to be the flower the boy liked most;

It has a scent as though Love
for its dower
Had on it all his odorous arrows
tost;
For though the rose has more
perfuming power,
The violet—haply 'cause 'tis
almost lost,
And takes us so much trouble to
discover—
Stands first with most, but always
with a love.

VIOLETS.

TAKE of my violets! I have
found them when
The liquid south stole o'er
them, on a bank

That leaned to running water. There's to me
A daintiness about these early flowers
That touches me like poetry. They blow
With such a simple loveliness among
The common herbs of pasture, and breathe out
Their lives so unobtrusively, like hearts
Whose beatings are too gentle for the world.
I love to go in the capricious days
Of April and hunt violets when the rain
Is in the blue cups trembling, and they nod
So gracefully to the kisses of the wind.

It may be deemed too idle, but the young
Read Nature like the manuscript of Heaven,
And call the flowers its poetry. Go out!
Ye spirits of habitual unrest.
And read it when the fever of the world
Hath made your hearts impatient, and, if life
Hath yet one spring unpoisoned, it will be
Like a beguiling music to its flow,
And you will no more wonder that I love
To hunt for violets in the April time.

W. P. WILLIS.

A GARDEN OF FLOWERS.

THE snowdrop and then the violet
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,
And their breath was mixed with fresh odour sent
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers, and the tulip tall,
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess
Till they die of their own dear loveliness.

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,
Whom youth makes so fair, and passion so pale,
That the light of its tremulous bells in seen
Through their pavilions of tender green.

And the hyacinth, purple and white and blue,
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music so delicate, soft and intense,
It was left like an odour within the sense.

And the rose, like a nymph to the bath addrest,
Whieh unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,
Till fold after fold to the fainting air

The soul of her beauty and love
lay bare.

And the wand-like lily, which
lifted up,
As a Mænad, its moonlight-
coloured cup,
Till the fiery star, which is its eye,
Gazed through the clear dew on
the tender sky.

And the jasmine faint, and the
sweet tuberose,
The sweetest flower for scent that
blows;
And all rare blossoms from every
clime
Grew in that garden in perfect
prime.

And on the stream whose incon-
stant bosom

Was prankt, under boughs of em-
bowering blossom,
With golden and green light,
slanting through
Their heaven of many a tangled
hue.

Broad water-lilies lay tremulously,
And starry river-buds glimmered
by,
And around them the soft stream
did glide and dance
With a motion of sweet sound and
radiance.

SHELLEY.

WILD FLOWERS.

WE have left behind us
The riches of the meadows—and now come
To visit the virgin primrose where she dwells
'Midst harebells and the wild wood hyacinths.
'Tis here she keeps her court. Dost see yon bank
The sun is kissing? Nay—go near! for there
('Neath those broad leaves, amidst yon straggling grasses),
Immaculate odours from the violet
Spring up for ever! Like sweet thoughts that come

Winged from the maiden fancy, and fly off
In music to the skies, and there are lost.
These ever-steaming odours seek the sun,
And fade in the light he scatters.

BARRY CORNWALL.

DAISIES AND PRIMROSES.

BUT we have daisies, which, like love
Or hope, spring everywhere;
And primoses, which droop above
Some self-consuming care.

So sad, so spiritual, so pale,
Born all too near the snow,
They pine for that sweet summer gale
Which they will never know.

WILSON.

THE WALLFLOWER.

THY banner waves above the tower,
Which Time and Ruin make their own;
Most faithful in the dreariest hour,
Such is thy praise, and thine alone!

Meet emblem art thou of the heart
Which in misfortune fastest clings;

And when our friends and wealth depart,
Love's mantle o'er us fondly flings.

A QUESTION.

AND now, of all fair flowers, which lov'st thou best?
The rose? She is a queen —more wonderful
Than any that have bloomed on Orient thrones:
Sabean Empress! in her breast, though small,
Beauty and infinite sweetness sweetly dwell,
Inextricable. Or dost dare prefer
The woodbine, for her fragrant summer breath?

Or primrose, who doth haunt the hours of spring;
A wood nymph, brightening places lone and green?
Or cowslip?—or the virgin violet—
The nun who, nestling in her cell of leaves,
Shrinks from the world in vain?

* * * *

Love *all* flowers, then. Be sure that wisdom lies
In every leaf and bloom on hills and dales
And thymy mountains; sylvan solitudes,
Where sweet-voiced waters sing the long year through:
In every haunt beneath the eternal sun

Where youth or age sends forth
its silent prayer
Or thoughtful meditation deigns
to stray.

BARRY CORNWALL
(PROCTOR).

WHITE LILAC.

OH were my love you lilac fair,
Wi' purple blossoms in the
spring,
And I a bird, to shelter there
When wearied on my little wing,
How wad I mourn when it was
torn
By autumn wild and winter rude!
But I wad sing on wanton wing

When youthfu' May its bloom renewed.

BURNS.

CLOVER.

THERE is clover, honey-sweet,
Thick and tangled at our feet;
Crimson-spotted lies the field
As in fight the warrior's shield.
Yonder poppies, full of scorn,
Proudly wave above the corn.
There is music at our feet
In the clover, honey-sweet.

You may track the winds that blow
Through the cornfields as they go;
From the wheat, as from a sea,

Springs the lark in ecstasy.
Now the bloom is on the blade,
In the sun and in the shade,
There is music at our feet
In the clover, honey-sweet.

THE PRIMROSE.

THOUGH storms may break
the primrose on its stalk,
Though frosts may blight
the freshness of its bloom,
Yet spring's awakening breath will
woo the earth,
To feed with kindliest dews its
favourite flower,
That blooms in mossy banks and
darksome glens,
Lighting the greensward with its
sunny smile. SHELLEY.

SWEET PEAS.

Here are sweet peas on tiptoe for a
flight;
With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate
white,
And taper fingers, catching at all things,
To bind them all about with tiny rings.

KEATS.

GRACEFUL flower, whose perfume lingers
On the sense with odours strange,
Climbing with thy fairy fingers
Where the sunbeams freely range;
Not the meanest aid disdaining

Which may help thee in thy
flight
From the dull earth, upward strain-
ing
To the realms of purer light.
May we learn from thy sweet
teaching
To aspire—to climb—to rise!
Ever, like thee, eager reaching
Hand and heart unto the skies.

THE WATER LILY.

O MELON-SCENTED lily!
O water-queen of flowers!
When shall I see the silver
waves
Dancing around thee like sweet
slaves

To beauty in its bowers;
When shall I take an earthly part
In honouring thy golden heart?

O pretty rose autumnal!
O fairy queen of trees!
When may I have thy gentle buds,
Adornèd with their emerald studs,
In their green palaces;
When see thy vernal velvet fall
Under thy ruby coronal?

J. H. REYNOLDS.

UTILITY OF FLOWERS.

CHIDE me not, laborious band,
For the idle flowers I brought;
Every aster in my hand
Goes home laden with a thought.

There was never mystery
But 'tis figured in the flowers;
Was never secret history
But birds tell it in the bowers.

One harvest from thy field
Homeward brought the oxen strong;
A second crop thy acres yield,
Which I gather in a song.

EMERSON.

STRAWBERRY BLOSSOMS.

Foresight.

THAT is work of waste and ruin—
Do as Charles and I are doing!

Strawberry blossoms, one and all,
We must spare them—here are many;
Look at it, the flower is small,
Small and low, though fair as any:
Do not touch it! summers two
I am older, Anne, than you.

Pull the primrose, sister Anne!
Pull as many as you can;
—Here are daisies, take your fill;
Pansies, and the cuckoo-flower:
Of the lofty daffodil
Make your bed, or make your bosom,
Only spare the strawberry-blossom.

Primroses, the Spring may love them—
Summer knows but little of them;
Violets, a barren kind,
Withered on the ground must lie;

Daisies leave no fruit behind,
When the pretty flowerets die;
Pluck them, and another year
As many will be blowing here.

God has given a kindlier power
To the favoured strawberry-flower.
Hither, soon as Spring is fled,
You and Charles and I will walk;
Lurking berries, ripe and red,
Then will hang on every stalk,
Each within its leafy bower;
And for that promise, spare the flower.

WORDSWORTH.

CHRYSANTHEMUM.

THE IVY GREEN.

Fidelity—Marriage.

OH, a dainty plant is the ivy green,
That creepeth o'er ruins old;
Of right choice food are his meals, I ween,
In his cell so lone and cold.
The walls must be crumbled, the stones decayed,
To pleasure his dainty whim;
And the mould'ring dust that years have made
Is a merry meal for him.
Creeping where no life is seen,
A rare old plant is the ivy green.

Fast he stealeth on, though he wears no wings,
And a staunch old heart has he;
How closely he twineth, how tight he clings
To his friend, the huge oak-tree!
And slily he traileth along the ground,
And his leaves he gently waves,
And he joyously twines and hugs around
The rich mould of dead men's graves.
Creeping where no life is seen,
A rare old plant is the ivy green.

Whole ages have fled, and their works decayed,
And nations scattered been,
But the stout old ivy shall never fade,

From its hale and hearty green.
The brave old plant in its lonely
days
Shall fatten upon the past,
For the stateliest building man
can raise
Is the ivy's food at last.
Creeping where no life is seen,
A rare old plant is the ivy green.

C. DICKENS.

STANZAS.

YES, mercies cluster like sweet
flowers, wher'er our foot-
steps tread,
Only we do not always see
the gifts for us outspread;

We murmur at the troubles that
we meet as we advance;
And gaze on our discomforts till
their number we enhance;
But common way-side blessing oft
escape our careless glance.
Yet still the thoroughfare of life
continuously they gem,
And weary spirits grow refreshed
while recognizing them.
O God of beauty and of love, we
thank Thee for these flowers,
Nurtured in day and sterile spots,
by sunshine and by showers,
These daily mercies springing up
to cheer this world of ours!

A. M.

LOVE LIES BLEEDING.

Hopeless, not Heartless.

NEVER enliven'd with the liveliest ray,
That fosters growth or checks or cheers decay,
Nor by the heaviest rain-drops more deprest;
This flower, that first appeared as Summer's guest,
Reserves her beauty 'mid autumnal leaves,
And to her mournful habits fondly cleaves,
When files of stateliest plants have ceased to bloom,

One after one submitting to their doom;
When her coevals, each and all, are fled,
What keeps her thus reclined upon her lonesome bed?
The old mythologists, more impressed than we
Of this late day, by character in tree
Or herb, that claimed peculiar sympathy,
Or by the silent lapse of fountain clear,
Or with the language of the viewless air,
By bird or beast made vocal, sought a cause
To solve the mystery, not in Nature's laws,
But in Man's fortunes. Hence a thousand tales

Sung to the plaintive lyre in Grecian vales;
Nor doubt that something of their spirit swayed
The fancy-stricken youth or heart-sick maid,
Who, while each stood companionless and eyed
This undeparting flower in crimson dyed,
Thought of a wound which death is slow to cure,
A fate that has endured and will endure;
And, patience coveting, yet passion feeding,
Called the rejected lingerer "Love lies Bleeding."

WORDSWORTH.

BRING FLOWERS.

BRING flowers, young flowers, for the festal board,
To wreathe the cup ere the wine is poured;
Bring flowers! they are springing in wood and vale,
Their breath floats out on the southern gale,
And the touch of the sunbeam hath waked the rose,
To deck the hall where the bright wine flows.

Bring flowers, to strew in the conqueror's path!
He hath shaken thrones with his stormy wrath!

He comes with the spoil of nations back,
The vines lie crushed in his chariot track,
The turf looks red where he won the day!
Bring flowers, to die in the conqueror's way!
Bring flowers to the captive's lonely cell,
They have tales of the joyous woods to tell;
Of the free blue streams, and the glowing sky,
And the bright world shut from his languid eye;
They will bear him a thought of the sunny hours,
And a dream of his youth,—bring him flowers, wild flowers.

Bring flowers, fresh flowers, for the bride to wear!
They were born to blush in her shining hair,
She is leaving the home of her childhood's mirth,
She hath bid farewell to her father's hearth;
Her place is now by another's side,—
Bring flowers for the locks of the fair young bride.

Bring flowers, pale flowers, on the bier to shed,
A crown for the brow of the early dead;
For this, through its leaves hath the white rose burst,
For this, in the woods, was the violet nursed;

Though they smile in vain for
what once was ours,
They are love's last gift,—bring ye
flowers, pale flowers!

Bring flowers to the shrine where
we kneel in prayer,
They are Nature's offering, their
place is there,
They speak of hope to the fainting
heart,
With a voice of promise they come
and part.
They sleep in dust through the
winter hours,
They break forth in glory,—bring
flowers, bright flowers!

MRS. HEMANS.

POOR ROBIN.

Compensation; or, an Equivalent.

NOW when the primrose makes a splendid show,
And lilies face the March winds in full blow,
And humbler growths, as moved with one desire,
Put on, to welcome Spring, their best attire,
Poor Robin yet is flowerless; but how gay
With his red stalks upon this sunny day!
And as his tufts of leaves he spreads, content

With a hard bed, and scanty nourishment,
Mixed with the green, some shine, not lacking power
To rival Summer's brightest scarlet flower;
And flowers they might well seem to passers-by,
If looked at only with a careless eye;
Flowers, or a richer produce (did it suit
The season), sprinklings of ripe strawberry fruit.
But while a thousand pleasures come unsought,
Why fix upon his wealth or want a thought?
Is the string touched in prelude to a lay

Of pretty fancies that would round
him play
When all the world acknowledged
elfin sway?
Or does it suit our humour to
commend
Poor Robin as a sure and crafty
friend,
Whose practice teaches, spite of
names to show
Bright colours, whether they de-
ceive or no?
Nay, we would simply praise the
free good-will
With which, though slighted, he,
on naked hill,
Or in warm valley, seeks his part
to fill;
Cheerful alike, if bare of flowers,
as now,

Or when his tiny gems shall deck
his brow:
Yet more, we wish that men by
men despised,
And such as lift their foreheads
over-prixed,
Should sometimes think, where'er
they chance to spy
This child of Nature's own
humility,
What recompense is kept in store
or left
For all that seem neglected or
bereft;
With what nice care equivalents
are given,
How just, how bountiful, the hand
of Heaven!

WORDSWORTH.

THE SMALL CELANDINE.

Joys to come.

THERE is a flower, the lesser celandine,
That shrinks, like many more, from cold and rain;
And, the first moment that the sun may shine,
Bright as the sun himself, 'tis out again!

When hailstones have been falling, swarm on swarm,
Or blasts the green field and the trees distrest,
Oft have I seen it muffled up from harm,

In close self-shelter, like a thing
at rest.

But lately, one rough day, this
flower I passed,
And recognized it, though an
altered form,
Now standing forth, an offering to
the blast.
And buffeted at will by rain
and storm.
I stopped, and said, with inly-
muttered voice,
"It doth not love the shower,
nor seek the cold:
This neither is its courage nor its
choice,
But its necessity in being old.

The sunshine may not cheer it, nor
the dew;
It cannot help itself in its decay;

Stiff in its members, withered, changed of hue,"
And, in my spleen, I smiled that it was grey.

To be a prodigal's favourite—then, worse truth,
A miser's pensioner—behold our lot!
Oh man, that from thy fair and shining youth
Age might but take the things youth needed not!

WORDSWORTH.

THE LEGACY OF THE ROSES.

OH! plant them above me, the soft and the bright,
The touched with the sunset's crimson light,
The warm with the earliest breath of Spring,
The sweet with the sweep of the west wind's wing;
Let the green bough and the red leaf wave,—
Plant the glad rose-tree upon my grave.

Why should the mournful willow weep,

O'er the quiet rest of the dreamless
sleep?
Weep for life with its toil and
care,
Its crime to shun, and its sorrow
to bear
Let tears, and the signs of tears be
shed
Over the living, not over the dead.

Plant not the cypress, nor yet the
yew,
Too heavy their shadow, too
gloomy their hue,
For one who is sleeping in faith
and love,
With a hope that is treasured in
heaven above;
In a holy trust are my ashes laid,
Cast ye no darkness, throw ye no
shade.

Plant the green sod with the crimson rose,
Let my friends rejoice o'er my calm repose;
Let my memory be like the odours shed,
My hope like the promise of early red;
Let strangers share in their breath and bloom,
Plant ye the bright roses over my tomb.

L. E. L.

TO A FLOWER.

DAWN, gentle flower,
From the morning earth
We will gaze and wonder
At thy wondrous birth!

Bloom, gentle flower!
  Lover of the light,
Sought by wind and shower
  Fondled by the night!

Fade, gentle flower!
  All thy white leaves close,
Having shown thy beauty,
  Time 'tis for repose.

Die, gentle flower,
  In the silent sun!
Lo! all pangs are over,
  All thy tasks are done!

Day hath no more glory,
  Though he soars high;
Thine is all man's story,—
  Live,—and love,—and die.

BARRY CORNWALL.

TO THE DAISY.

BRIGHT flower! whose home is everywhere,
Bold in maternal Nature's care,
And all the long year through the heir
Of joy or sorrow;
Methinks that there abides in thee
Some concord with humanity,
Given to no other flower I see
The forest thorough!

Is it that man is soon deprest?
A thoughtless thing! who, once unblest,
Does little on his memory rest,
Or on his reason,

And thou wouldst teach him how
to find shelter under every
wind,
A hope for times that are unkind,
And every season?

Thou wander'st the wide world
about,
Uncheckd by pride or scrupulous
doubt,
With friends to greet thee, or
without,
Yet pleased and willing;
Meek, yielding to the occasion's
call,
And all things suffering from all,
Thy function apostolical
In peace fulfilling.

WORDSWORTH.

FLOWERS.

HERE snowdrops cold and
blue-eyed harebells blend
Their tender tears as o'er
the stream they bend;
The lovesick violet and the prim-
rose pale
Bow their sweet heads and whisper
to the gale;
With secret sighs the virgin lily
droops,
And jealous cowslips hang their
tawny cups;
And the young rose, in beauty's
damask pride,
Drinks the warm blushes of his
bashful bride;

With honeyed lips, enamoured
woodbines meet,
Clasp with fond arms and mix
their kisses sweet.

DARWIN.

A DIALOGUE.

THE LOVER.

I GIVE to thee the autumn rose,
Let it say how dear thou art;
All my lips dare not disclose
Let it whisper to thy heart;
How love draws my soul to thee,
Withont language thou mayst see.

LADY.

I give to thee the aspen leaf;
'Tis to show I tremble still
When I muse on all the grief

Love can cause if false or ill;
How too many have believed,
Trusted long, and been deceived.

THE LOVER.

I give to thee a faded wreath,
  Teaching thee—alas, too well!
How I spent my latest breath,
  Seeking all my truth to tell,
But thy coldness made me die,
Victim of thy cruelty.

LADY.

I give to thee the honey-flower,
  Courteous, best, and bravest knight,
Fragrant in the summer's shower,
  Shrinking from the sunny light;
May it not an emblem prove
Of untold, but tender love.

CHRISTINE PIRE.

A POSIE.

O LUVE will venture in where
it daurna well be seen;
O luve will venture in where
wisdom ance has been;
But I will down yon river rove
amang the woods sae green,
And a' to pu' a posie to my ain
dear May.

The primrose I will pu', the first-
ling o' the year,
And I will pu' the pink, the emblem
o' my dear,
For she's the pink o' womankind
and blooms without a peer—
And a' to be a posie to my ain
dear May.

I'll pu' the budding rose when
Phœbus peeps in view,
For it's like a baumie kiss o' her
sweet bonnie mou';
The hyacinth's for constancy, wi'
its unchanging blue—
And a' to be a posie to my ain
dear May!

The lily it is pure, and the lily it
is fair,
And in her lovely bosom I'll place
the lily there;
The daisy's for simplicity and
unaffected air—
And a' to be a posie to my ain
dear May.

The hawthorn I will pu', with its
locks o' siller grey,
Where, like an aged man, it stands
at break of day,

But the songster's nest within the
bush I winna tak' away—
And a' to be a posie to my ain
dear May.

The woodbine I will pu' when the
evening star is near,
And the diamond drops o' dew
shall be her een sae clear;
The violet's for modesty, which
weel she fa's to wear—
And a' to be a posie to my ain
dear May.

I'll tie the posie round wi' the
silken band o' luve,
And I'll place it in her breast, and
I'll swear by a' above,
That to my latest draught o' life
the band shall ne'er remove—
And this will be a posie to my
ain dear May.

ROBERT BURNS.

A FLORAL VALENTINE.

ROSY red the hills appear
With the light of morning,
Beauteous clouds in ether clear
All the east adorning;
While through mist the meadows shine—
Wake, my love, my valentine!

For thy locks of raven hue,
Flowers of hoarfrost pearly,
Crocus cups of gold and blue,
Snowdrops drooping early,
With mezereon-sprigs combine;
Rise, my love, my valentine!

O'er the margin of the flood,
Pluck the daisy peeping;

Through the covert of the wood,
  Hunt the sorrel creeping;
With the little celandine
  Crown my love, my valentine.

Pansies, on their lowly stems,
  Scattered o'er the fallows,
Hazel-buds with crimson gems,
  Green and mossy sallows,
Tufted moss and ivy twine,
Deck my love, my valentie.

Few and simple flow'rets these,
  Yet to me less glorious
Garden beds and orchard trees!
  Since this wreath victorious
Binds you now for ever mine,
O my love, my valentine!

MONTGOMERY.

FLOWER SYMBOLS.

IN Eastern lands they talk in
flowers,
And they tell in a garland
their loves and cares;
Each blossom that blooms in their
garden bowers
On its leaves a mystic language
bears.

The rose is a sign of joy and love,
Young, blushing love in its
earliest dawn;
And the mildness that suits the
gentle dove
From the myrtle's snowy flower
is drawn.

Innocence shines in the lily's bell

Pure as the heart in its native heaven;
Fame's bright star and glory's swell
In the glossy leaf of the bay is given.

The silent, soft, and humble heart
In the violet's hidden sweetness breathes;
And the tender soul that cannot part
A twine of evergreen fondly wreathes.

The cypress, that daily shades the grave,
Is sorrow that mourns her bitter lot;
And faith, that a thousand ills can brave,

Speaks in thy blue leaves, forget-
me-not.

Then gather a wreath from the
garden flowers,
And tell the wish of thy heart in
flowers.

PERCIVAL.

FLOWERS.

SPAKE full well, in language
quaint and olden,
One who dwelleth by the
castled Rhine,
When he called the flowers, so
blue and golden,
Stars, that in earth's firmament do
shine.

Stars they are, wherein we read our history,
As astrologers and seers of eld;
Yet not wrapped about with awful mystery,
Like the burning stars, which they beheld.

Wondrous truths, and manifold as wondrous,
God hath written in those stars above;
But not less in the bright flowerets under us
Stands the revelation of His love.

Bright and glorious is that revelation,
Written all over this great world of ours
Making evident our own creation,

In these stars of earth,—these golden flowers.

And the Poet, faithful and far-seeing,
Sees, alike in stars and flowers, a part
Of the self-same, universal being,
Which is throbbing in his brain and heart.

Gorgeous flowerets in the sunlight shining,
Blossoms flaunting in the eye of day,
Tremulous leaves, with soft and silver lining,
Buds that open only to decay;

Brilliant hopes, all woven in gorgeous tissues,
Flaunting gaily in the golden light;

Large desires, with more uncertain issues,
Tender wishes, blossoming at night!

These in flowers and men are more than seeming;
Workings are they of the self-same powers,
Which the Poet, in no idle dreaming,
Seeth in himself and in the flowers.

Everywhere about us are they glowing,
Some like stars, to tell us Spring is born;
Others, their blue eyes with tears o'erflowing,
Stand like Ruth amid the golden corn;

Not alone in Spring's armorial bearing,
And in Summer's green emblazoned field,
But in arms of brave old Autumn's wearing
In the centre of his brazen shield;
Not alone in meadows and green alleys,
On the mountain top, and by the brink
Of sequestered pools in woodland valleys,
Where the slaves of Nature stoop to drink;

Not alone in her vast dome of glory,
Not on graves of bird and beast alone,

But on old cathedrals, high and hoary,
On the tombs of heroes, carved in stone;

In the cottage of the rudest peasant,
In ancestral homes, whose crumbling towers,
Speaking of the Past unto the Present,
Tell us of the ancient Games of Flowers;

In all places, then, and in all seasons,
Flowers expand their light and soul-like wings,
Teaching us, by most persuasive reasons,
How akin they are to human things.

And with chi|dlike, credulous affection
We behold their tender buds expand;
Emblems of our own great resurrection,
Emblems of the bright and better land.

LONGFELLOW.

A LOVER'S OFFERING.

I HAVE traced the valleys fair
In May morning's dewy air,
My bonny Mary Lee!
Wilt thou deign the wreath to wear
Gathered all for thee?
They are not flowers of pride,

For they graced the dingle side;
Yet they grew in Heaven's smile,
My gentle Mary Lee!
Can they fear thy frowns the while,
Though offered by me?

Here's the lily of the vale
That perfumed the morning gale,
My fairy Mary Lee!
All so spotless and so pale,
Like thine own purity.
And might I make it known,
'Tis an emblem of my own
Love—if I dare so name
My esteem for thee.
Surely flowers can bear no blame,
My bonny Mary Lee.

Here's the violet's modest blue,
That 'neath hawthorns hides from view,

My gentle Mary Lee,
Would show whose heart is true
While it thinks of thee.
While they choose each lowly spot,
The sun disdains them not;
I'm as lowly too indeed,
My charming Mary Lee;
So I've brought the flowers to plead,
And win a smile from thee.

Here's a wild rose just in bud;
Spring's beauty in its hood,
My bonny Mary Lee,
'Tis the first of all the wood
I could find for thee
Though a blush is scarcely seen,
Yet it hides its worth within,
Like my love; for I've no power,
My angel Mary Lee,

To speak, unless the flower
Can make excuse for me.

Though they deck no princely halls
In bouquets for glittering balls,
My gentle Mary Lee,
Richer hues than painted walls
Will make them dear to thee;
For the blue and laughing sky
Spreads a grander canopy
Than all wealth's golden skill,
My charming Mary Lee,
Love would make them dearer still,
That offers them to thee.

My wreathèd flowers are few,
Yet no fairer drink the dew,
My bonny Mary Lee.
They may seem as trifles too—
Not I hope to thee.
Some may boast a richer prize,

Under pride and wealth's disguise,
None a fonder offering bore
Than this of mine to thee;
And can true love wish for more?
Surely not, Mary Lee.

CLARE.

UNE PENSÉE.

There's pansies; that' for thoughts.

SHAKESPEARE.

GAY lilies on the virgin breast,
Of her who dieth young,
And o'er the warrior gone to rest
Let laurel wreaths be flung;
But strew ye purple pansies,
When the old man's knell is rung.

Fair types these lily flowers are,
Of her for whom ye weep;
Whom earnest prayer and loving care,
Could not among us keep;
But strew ye purple pansies,
When the old man falls asleep.

Well fitting for the warrior dead,
The laurels he has won,
Proof of the brave life he has led,
The dangers he has run;
But strew ye purple pansies
When the old man's war is done.

By all the glances backward cast
Along life's weary shore,
By all the memories of the past
That may return no more;
Oh, strew ye purple pansies
When the old man's life is o'er.

TOM HOOD.

FADED FLOWERS.

FAREWELL, ye withered flowers,
That on the cold ground lie;
How gay ye smiled
'Mid the brown wild
'Neath summer's painted sky.

Passèd hath your bloom away,
Your stalks are sere and bent;
On the howling blast
The rain sweeps past
From the dim firmament.

I think me of your pride
When zephyrs came with spring;
Then sigh to know

What wreck and woe
A few brief months may bring.

Emblems of human fate,
Ye lay—though bright and fair
Life's morn may be,
Its eve may see
The clouds of grief and care.

Green spring again shall bid
Your stems with bloom be crowned;
But alas! to man
In earth's brief span
No second growth comes round.

For age's winter bows
The grey head to the clod;
Dust goes to dust,
And (as we trust)
The spirit back to God.

MOIR (DELTA).

A POET-LOVER'S FANCIES.

THERE has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate;
She's coming, my dove, my dear,
She's coming, my life, my fate.
The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near!"
The white rose weep, "She is late;"
The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear!"
And the lily whispers, "I wait."

TENNYSON.

THE NETTLE.

TENDER-HANDED touch a nettle,
And it stings you for your pains;
Grasp it like a man of metal,
And it soft as silk remains.

So it is with common natures—
Treat them gently, they rebel;
But be rough as nutmeg-graters,
And the rogues obey you well.

AARON HILL.

LOVE OF NATURE.

HE whose heart will bound to mark
The full bright burst of summer morn,
Loves, too, each little dewy spark
By leaf or flow'ret worn.
Cheap forms and common hues, 'tis true,
Through the bright shower-drop meet his view;
The colouring may be of this earth,
The lustre comes of heavenly birth.

KEBLE.

WISDOM IN FLOWERS.

GOD sent flowers to beautify
The earth and cheer man's careful mood;
And he is happiest who has power
To gather wisdom from a flower,
And wake his heart in every hour
To pleasant gratitude.

MARY HOWITT.

TEACHINGS IN FLOWERS.

THERE'S a lesson in each flower,
A story in each stream and bower;
In every herb on which you tread
Are written words which, rightly read,
Will lead you from each fragrant sod
To hope, to holiness, and God.

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

LESSON OF THE FLOWERS.

LOOK at the fate of Summer flowers,
Which blow at day-break, droop ere even-song;
And, grieved for their brief date, confess that ours
Measured by what we are and ought to be—
Measured by all that trembling we foresee,
Is not so long!

If human life do pass away,
Perishing yet more swiftly than the flower

Whose frail existence is but of a day,
What space hath Virgin Beauty to disclose
Her sweets and triumph o'er the breathing Rose?
Not even an hour!

The deepest grove whose foliage hid
The happiest lovers Arcady may boast,
Could not the entrance of this thought forbid:
O be thou wise as they, soul-gifted maid!
Nor rate too high what must so quickly fade,
So soon be lost!

Then shall Love teach some virtuous youth

To draw, out of the object of his eyes,
The whilst on thee they gaze in simple truth,
Hues more exalted—"a refinèd form"
That dreads not age, nor suffers from the worm,
And never dies!

WORDSWORTH.

FORGET ME NOT.

WHEN thy sad Master's far away,
Go, happier far than he,
Go, little flower, with her to stay,

With whom he may not be;
There bid her mourn his wayward lot,
And whisper still, Forget me not.
Sweet as the gale of fate, that blew
To waft me to a spot like this—
Frail as the hours that quickly flew
To tear me from the transient bliss—
Thy humble blossoms long shall prove
An emblem fit for parted love.

WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED.

MOSS.

WHEN Nature dresses
It fills its part well, therefore honour it;
There seems a kindly feeling in it, as though
A spirit of goodness peeped from out the earth
To shield decay.

BARRY CORNWALL.

THE DAFFODILS.

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd—
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle in the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay;
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,

Tossing their heads in sprightly
dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company;
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

WORDSWORTH.

SERENADE.

LISTEN! from the forest boughs,
The voice-like angel of the Spring
Utters his soft vows
To the proud rose, blossoming.
And now beneath thy lattice, dear,
I am like the bird, complaining,
Thou above (I fear)
Like the rose, disdaining.

BARRY CORNWALL.

The Albanian Love-Letter.

An exquisite invention this,
Worthy of Love's most honied kiss,
This art of writing billet-doux
In buds, and odours, and bright hues,—
In saying all one feels and thinks
In clever daffodils and pinks,
Uttering (as well as silence may)
The sweetest words the sweetest way:
How fit, too, for a lady's bosom,
The place where billet-doux repose 'em!

How charming in some rural spot,
Combining love with garden plot,

At once to cultivate one's flowers,
And one's epistolary powers,
Growing one's own choice words
and fancies
In orange tubs and beds of pan-
sies;
One's sighs and passionate decla-
rations
In odorous rhet'ric of carnations;
Seing how far one's stocks will
reach;
Taking due care one's flowers of
speech
To guard from blight as well as
bathos,
And watering, every day, one's
pathos!

A letter comes just gathered, we
Doat on its tender brilliancy;
Inhale its delicate expression

Of balm and pea; and its confession,
Made with as sweet a maiden blush
As ever morn bedewed on bush;
And then when we have kissed its wit
And heart, in water putting it,
To keep its remarks fresh, go round
Our little eloquent plot of ground!
And with delighted hands compose
Our answer, all of lily and rose,
Of tuberose and of violet,
And little darling mignonette;
And gratitude, and polyanthus,
And flowers that say, "Felt never man thus!"

THE DIAL OF FLOWERS.

'Twas a lovely thought to mark the hours,
As they floated in light away,
By the opening and the folding flowers,
That laugh to the Summer's day.

Thus had each moment its own rich hue,
And its graceful cup and bell,
In whose coloured vase might sleep the dew,
Like a pearl in an ocean-shell.

To such sweet signs might the time have flowed

In a golden current on,
Ere from the garden, man's first abode,
The glorious guests were gone.

So might the days have been brightly told—
Those days of song and dreams—
When shepherds gathered their flocks of old
By the blue Arcadian streams.

So in those isles of delight, that rest
Far off in a breezeless main,
Which many a bark, with a weary quest,
Has sought, but still in vain.

Yet is not life, in its real flight,
Marked thus—even thus—on earth,

By the closing of one hope's
delight,
And another's gentle birth!

Oh! let us live, so that flower by
flower,
Shutting in turn, may leave
A lingerer still for the sunset hour,
A charm for the shaded eve.

MRS. HEMANS.

Thus in each flower and simple bell
That in our path betrodden lie,
Are sweet remembrancers who tell
How fast the wingèd moments
fly.

CHARLOTTE SMITH.

Dial of Flowers.

'Twas a lovely thought to mark the hours
As they floated in light away,
By the opening and the folding flowers
That laugh to the Summer's day.

MRS. HEMANS.

TIME OF OPENING

	H.	M.
Yellow Goatsbeard.....	3	5
Common Base Hawkweed...	4	0
Bristly Helminthia.....	4	5
Alpine Borkhausia...	4	5
Naked-stalked Poppy.....	5	0
Orange Day-Lily	5	5
Red Hawkweed	5	6
Common Nipplewort.....	5	6

	H.	M.
Meadow Goshmore	6	0
Red Base Hawkweed	6	30
White Water-Lily	7	0
White Spiderwort	7	0
Garden Lettuce	7	0
Common Pimpernel	7	8
Mouse-eared Hawkweed	8	0
Field Marigold	9	0
Purple Sandwort	9	10
Ice Plant	10	0
Red Sandwort	10	0

TIME OF CLOSING

	H.	M.
Bristly Helminthia	12	0
Alpine Agathyrsus	12	0
Creeping Mallow	12	1
Red Pink	1	0
Red Boxhawkweed	1	0

	H.	M.
Bearded Mesembryanthemum	2	0
Small Purslane	2	3
Field Marigold	3	0
African Marigold	3	4
Ice Plant	4	0
White Spiderwort	4	0
Meadow Goshmore	5	0
White Water-Lily	6	0
Naked-stalked Poppy	7	0
Copper-coloured Day-Lily	7	8
Common Dandelion	8	0
Yellow-Goatsbeard	9	10
Garden Lettuce	10	0
Common Sow-Thistle	11	12

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